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A GOOD TURN
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THE AWFUL SLEUTH

HOW DO HOLLYWOOD'S GUMSHOES STACK UP?

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News worth sharing.

Raking in the gold

Local athlete beats out Dutch, Chinese speedskaters at World Cup ◐ International Skating Union series resumes Jan. 21 in Salt Lake City ◐ Finals set for March 9 in Berlin

PETER DEJONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ London native Christine Nesbitt competes during the women's 1,000-metre race yesterday at the World Cup of speedskating in Heerenveen, Netherlands.

London native Christine Nesbitt has added three more gold medals to her collection after this weekend's speedskating World Cup in Heerenveen, Netherlands.

Nesbitt, 26, raced to victory in two individual events — finishing yesterday's 1,000-metre contest in one minute 15.32 seconds and Saturday's 1,500 metres in one minute 55.68 seconds. The Olympic champion led Canadians Cindy Klassen and Brittany Schussler to gold in team pursuit, finishing more than two seconds ahead of Russia.

Nesbitt finished fifth in the 500 metres, won by Jing Yu of China.

"I started off really hard, the fastest start I've ever had in a 1,500," she said. "It's still the fastest time also that I've ever skated in Europe. There were a lot of good things, but always room for improvement, which is also a positive thing."

The wins add to a solid World Cup season start for Nesbitt. She's unbeaten in the 1,000 metres, earning golds this fall in Chelyabinsk, Russia and Astana, Kazakhstan. Her 1,500 victory marked her second consecutive win at that distance.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/WITH FILES FROM METRO AND THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Town Hall meeting

Roll up your sleeves

◐ And lend a hand to plan Veterans Memorial Parkway {page 2}

Mom! Who is that man in red?

Explaining Santa to the little ones {page 12}

Bring on the brisket

A long beer bath keeps this dish moist and flavourful {page 14}

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1 news

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On the web at metronews.ca

Chaos in the wake of Oklahoma State's football victory over its state rival leaves 12 injured. Video at metronews.ca/video

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CONTRIBUTED

▶ Volunteers plant trees earlier in the fall at Starlim North America property along Veterans Memorial Parkway. Leaders of the parkway enhancement project are planning a public meeting this week to give people more information about a planned multimillion-dollar spruce-up along the stretch of road.

Town hall meeting to focus on plans for parkway

Big effort aims to plant 8,000 trees along 10-kilometre route Project expected to include $3.5M in donations, $2.5M worth of in-kind services, 32,000 hours of volunteer service

DAWN LYONS
LONDON@METRONEWS.CA

Ever wanted to try your hand at community planning or maybe just give a little something back to London?

Well, now's your chance.

Leaders of the Veterans Memorial Parkway enhancement project are looking for feedback — and a few extra hands — on a five-year plan to give the stretch of road a spruce up.

The enhancement project got off the ground in 2005 with the renaming of Airport Road. There was a bit of a hiatus after councillors approved a landscaping plan in 2006. Work officially started along the Highway 401 connector in September when some of the first trees were planted.

Overall, the project aims to make a memorial of the east-end road. Some stone monuments — with words like valour etched into their surface — are already in place. Future plans call for 15 more commemorative formations that will be guarded be lines of trees serving as sentinels, said Barry Sandler, executive director of the parkway program.

Each of the monuments will feature words that are evocative of the values of service.

"It is unique because the entire parkway becomes a tribute to all veterans without any reference to one individual or a specific battle or campaign," Sandler said.

Leaders of the effort have been working with businesses and community groups to generate interest in the project. Now, they want to get the community-at large involved.

"It's personal, it's about our community and we can take pride in it," Sandler said.

If you go

▶ **Town hall.** The Veterans Memorial Parkway town hall meeting will be from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. tomorrow at the North London Optimist Community Centre, 1345 Cheapside St.

Police raid nets arrests, drugs

Police seized weapons, cocaine, OxyContin, ecstasy and Airsoft guns after executing a search warrant last week on Waterloo Street.

Two London men are facing charges in connection with the investigation, carried out by London police and the RCMP. The drugs are valued at $24,810, police said. Officers also seized $3,240 in cash. METRO

For more local news visit metronews.ca/london

Suspect sought in robbery

Police are investigating a robbery at Scotiabank on 750 Richmond St.

A man walked into the bank about 1 p.m. on Thursday and demanded cash from a teller. He left with an undisclosed amount of cash. METRO

Man wanted for violent crimes: Cops

London police are looking for a man wanted on three arrest warrants for recent violent acts.

Jamie O'Neil, 26, faces charges of forcible confinement, assault and property damage. He is described as white, with short blond hair, about five-foot-nine and 160 to 180 pounds. He has Mom tattooed on his right fingers and Dad tattooed on his left fingers.

Anyone with information is asked to call 519-661-5670.

METRO

C-note challenge surprises Londoners

Small group hands out good cheer around Forest City • People in New Brunswick and New Zealand among those who participated in similar events

GORD EVANS PHOTOGRAPHY

▶ People dig into free pizza on Saturday during the $100 Challenge downtown. About 20 people participated in this year's event, aimed at getting people to dip into their wallets and spread a little goodwill.

DAWN LYONS
LONDON@METRONEWS.CA

From feeding the homeless to surprising a server with one gigantic tip, the season of giving took on a bit of new meaning during Saturday's $100 Challenge.

About 20 people stepped up to the plate for this year's event, which challenged people to take $100 from their pockets and do some good for others.

Even buying a simple cup of coffee for a stranger gives you a heartwarming feeling, said founder Andrew Schiestel, 29, of London. He recounted a moment he witnessed Saturday when someone did just that.

"We read about do-good stories in the papers, but this is an opportunity for us to live those stories for one day. That's what I love about this."
ANDREW SCHIESTEL, 29, OF LONDON, $100 CHALLENGE FOUNDER

"The gentleman had a beautiful look of gratitude on his face and raised his coffee as a thank-you," Schiestel said. "That's the essence of this."

The do-good event marked its second year over the weekend, and Schiestel said he's not opposed to having more than one event each year.

The ball got rolling in 2010 after Schiestel blogged about giving a homeless man $100.

From there, some of his friends decided to help a refugee family from South Africa.

▶ Andrew Schieste

Once that story hit the web, more people wanted in on the action, prompting Schiestel to issue the inaugural challenge.

City manager resigns for new post

FILE

▶ Jeff Fielding

The city will start hunting for a new city manager early in the new year.

Jeff Fielding, who's held the post since 2004, tendered his resignation Friday. Fielding has accepted a job as Burlington's city manager and will leave London effective Jan. 29.

Tim Dobbie will serve as interim manager while the city recruits a new leader. Dobbie is a former city manager and most recently has been helping the city review its organizational structure.

Fielding came to London from his hometown of Kitchener, where he also served as city manager. Before that he held a variety of municipal management jobs in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Calgary.

METRO

Cuts needed to avoid tax increase

The 2012 budget will be tabled today at city hall, and councilors will need to find nearly $8 million in savings to avoid a property-tax increase.

The draft budget includes a 2.4 per cent tax increase as opposed to the 1.4 per cent increase council asked city staff to include during talks this summer. With a 1.4 per cent increase, councillors would have needed to find $4 million in savings to whittle things down to zero.

Much of the $8 million shortfall is blamed on anticipated salary arbitration rulings for police officers and firefighters, city officials say. Mayor Joe Fontana still believes council can avoid a tax increase and said he hasn't ruled out the sale of city assets to get there.

People will have many opportunities to give input before the budget's finalized in February.

AM980/AM980.CA

Music, princesses at party in park

Glass Tiger has been named the headliner of this year's Rockin' New Year's Eve in Victoria Park.

Other musicians set to perform during the Dec. 31 party include country artist Genevieve Fisher and local talent U-Turn.

This year's festivities have a few special things in store for kids with an early 9 p.m. fireworks show and a My Perfect Princess Party with performances from Disney princesses. METRO

City Symposium on tap this week

An artist, a researcher and a community activist are on the lineup for London's fourth City Symposium at 7 p.m. tomorrow in the Wolf Performance Hall. The free symposiums are designed to highlight some of the city's best thinkers and social innovators. During each event, participants make a 15-minute presentation about their area of expertise. People are then invited to mingle with the presenters and chat about the presentations. METRO

Knights tack on two more wins

The London Knights posted a winning weekend with new leadership behind the bench.

The Knights shut out Saginaw 6-0 on Friday at the John Labatt Centre, taking the ice hours after Coach Mark Hunter announced former NHL star Rob Ramage had been named an assistant coach. Hunter took over last week after his brother made the leap to the NHL. Ramage, a former Toronto Maple Leafs captain, was convicted in 2007 of impaired driving cause death. He began serving a four-year prison sentence in July 2010 and was granted parole after 10 months.

Following up Friday's win, the Knights posted a 5-3 victory Saturday on the road against the Owen Sound Attack. METRO

Violent flyer diverts flight

Unruly passenger uttered bomb threat on WestJet plane to Toronto
Man has history of mental illness

DAVID PROCTOR
OTTAWA@METRONEWS.CA
METRO CANADA IN VANCOUVER

A WestJet flight from Vancouver to Toronto was diverted to Thunder Bay, Ont., on Saturday when a passenger allegedly grew violent.

The man, a 27-year-old Portuguese citizen with a history of mental illness, was restrained by the crew. He allegedly uttered a bomb threat once the plane landed. An overnight search of the aircraft by Ontario and Thunder Bay police turned up nothing, and the plane completed its flight yesterday.

"It is extremely rare that we have to divert for an unruly guest," explained WestJet media relations manager Robert Palmer.

"Normally speaking, if the individual that was behaving inappropriately calms down ... we'll resume the flight and call the police to meet us at the destination. Only in extreme situations like this do we divert, which shows you what kind of concern was expressed by the crew."

The man was taken into custody by the Thunder Bay Police Service and brought to the Thunder Bay Regional Health Centre for a medical assessment. No charges have been laid.

Hong Kong. Ceremony

▶ Canadian veterans, from left, Ken Pifher, Gerry Gerrard and George Peterson salute during the Canadian Commemorative Ceremony on the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong at Sai Wan War Cemetery yesterday in Hong Kong.

KIN CHEUNG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Honouring our heroes

The ceremony honoured the 1,975 Canadian soldiers who fought to defend Hong Kong during the Second World War and remembered over 550 Canadian soldiers who died in the battle.

Two Mounties shot during standoff

HEATHER MCINTYRE
IN EDMONTON

Two RCMP officers were shot early yesterday during a standoff southwest of Edmonton.

Both were transported to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries following an exchange of gunfire at 3:30 a.m. at a rural residence 18 kilometres west of the Village of Breton.

"They're non-life-threatening injures," said RCMP Sgt. Tim Taniguchi. "One is superficial and the other is more serious."

The officers, from Red Deer and members of the RCMP emergency response team, were called at 5:20 p.m. Saturday following a complaint that a 35-year-old man had been shot outside the home.

That man was transported to hospital.

The standoff came to an end just before 11 a.m. yesterday when both a man and a woman from inside were taken into custody.

Bus strikes and kills Montreal girl

A five-year-old girl was struck and killed by a city bus in Montreal, police said yesterday.

The bus was headed toward a reserved parking area at a busy subway terminus in the city's east end Saturday evening and hit the girl as she was crossing the street.

The child was rushed to hospital, where she died soon after, said Montreal police Const. Daniel Lacoursiere. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Shaking the status quo

Singapore SlutWalk protests sexual violence against women

Hundreds of people gathered at a park in Singapore yesterday to protest sexual violence against women as part of the global SlutWalk movement, in a rare public demonstration in the tightly controlled city state.

The event featured live music, speeches and a women's Muay Thai martial-arts exhibition at downtown Singapore's Speakers' Corner, the only public outdoor space where demonstrations are allowed in the Southeast Asian country.

Participants at the rally did not dress provocatively as some activists have in SlutWalks in U.S. and Canadian cities.

"The idea was not to vamp it up, because women can get raped regardless of what they're wearing," said Vanessa Ho, who organized the event with six friends. "We're trying to raise awareness against victim-blaming and slut-shaming."

SlutWalk marches have been held in cities around the world, including earlier this year in New Delhi and Sydney. The protests originated in Toronto, where they were sparked by a police officer's remark that women could avoid being raped by not dressing like "sluts."

"The world is dominated by males, so there's a male mentality," said Esaint Chiang, a 21-year-old student who attended yesterday's protest. "I think it's a good idea to bring awareness to these issues, but I like that they're not being so provocative, playing by the rules."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRYAN VAN DER BEEK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Jess Hutch, left, takes a picture of fellow volunteer Jillian Yue wearing SlutWalk underwear as people gather at Hong Lim Park as part of the global SlutWalk movement in Singapore yesterday.

Date rape

- Corinna Lim, executive director of the Singapore women's-rights group Aware, said many sexual assault cases go unreported, especially date rape.
- Aware recently started a hotline for sexual abuse victims and offers to accompany women to the police and the hospital after an assault.
- "The family of the victim will sometimes say, 'What were you wearing?'" Lim said. "Singapore women have modernized quite quickly in a short time, but Singapore is still a very conservative society."

KENTUCKY CHURCH

Interracial ban to be nullified

The pastor at a Kentucky church says he will nullify a vote taken by members of his congregation that bans interracial couples.

Stacy Stepp, who is pastor of the Gulnare Free Will Baptist Church in Pike County, told the Lexington Herald-Leader on Saturday that he plans to declare the vote approving the policy null and void.

The move comes after Stepp, who says he opposed the policy, asked for advice from the Sandy Valley Conference of Free Will Baptists.

The conference met Saturday and issued a statement saying it had determined there weren't enough members voting in favour of the proposal, which would require a change in church bylaws.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Zambia dismisses call to arrest Bush

Zambia has dismissed an international rights group's call for the arrest on torture charges of former president George W. Bush, who has been touring Africa to raise awareness about cervical and breast cancer.

"On what basis does Amnesty International want us to arrest President Bush?" state media quoted Foreign Affairs Minister Chishimba Kambwili as saying while Bush, his wife and daughters ended their visit to Zambia on Saturday.

Bush started his Africa tour in Tanzania.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

India. Violence

▶ An Indian policeman, right, takes evasive action as a Kashmiri Shiite Muslim charges at him with chains in Srinagar, India, yesterday.

MUKHTAR KHAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Muslims defy curfew in Kashmir

Authorities used batons, tear gas and water canons to break up Muslim religious processions held yesterday in defiance of a strict curfew in the main Indian-controlled city of the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, police said. At least 70 people were detained after police imposed the curfew in some parts of Srinagar to prevent gatherings marking the Muslim month of Muharram from developing into anti-India protests, police said.

Anti-gay law may hit AIDS fight in Nigeria

A bill originally designed to outlaw gay marriage in Nigeria likely has consequences far beyond its initial scope — criminalizing gay groups and organizations could jeopardize millions of dollars of Western aid geared toward stopping the spread of HIV and AIDS. Nigeria likely cannot afford to scorn foreign aid in the fight against HIV/AIDS, experts say.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Putin party committed violations: Opposition

Protests held in Moscow and St. Petersburg More than 170 arrests

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's party struggled to hang on to its majority in Russia's parliamentary election, suggesting Russians were wearying of the man who has dominated Russian politics for more than a decade.

Rival parties and election monitors said even a result of around 50 per cent was inflated, alleging ballot-stuffing and other significant violations at the polls. Many feared the vote count would be manipulated.

Putin wanted to see his United Russia party do well in yesterday's election as a sign of popular support for his return to the presidency in a vote now three months away. Despite the sobering setback, he was still expected to have little trouble reclaiming the position he held from 2000 to 2008.

Putin has systematically destroyed any potential challengers and most Russians do not see any credible alternatives, despite growing dissatisfaction with his strongman style. Grumbling over pervasive official corruption and the gap between ordinary people and the superrich has become widespread.

Putting a positive spin on the disappointing returns, Putin said "we can ensure the stable development of the country with this result." United Russia held a two-thirds majority in the outgoing State Duma, which allowed it to change the constitution unchallenged. But the party is increasingly disliked, seen as representing a corrupt bureaucracy and known as the "party of crooks and thieves." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DMITRY LOVETSKY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Russian police officers detain an opposition activist during a protest against vote rigging in St. Petersburg, Russia, yesterday. Russians cast their ballots with muted enthusiasm in parliamentary elections, a vote opinion polls suggest could reduce the strength of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's party.

Early results

- **Results with 75 per cent of** precincts showed about 50 per cent for United Russia.
- **This was in line with an** exit poll conducted by the VTsIOM polling agency tallying United Russia at 48.5 per cent and another done by the FOM polling agency at 46 per cent.
- **About 60 per cent of** Russia's 110 million registered voters cast ballots, down from 64 per cent four years ago.
- **Only seven parties were** allowed to field candidates for Parliament this year, while the most vocal opposition groups were barred.
- **Golos, an independent** election-monitoring group, compiled some 5,300 complaints of violations, a third of which said they were pressured to vote for United Russia.
- **Final results expected at** 1 a.m. EDT today.

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No surprises in NDP leadership debate

500 New Democrats attended first debate Five more to come in the new year

FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ NDP leadership candidates, from left, Nathan Cullen, Romeo Saganash and Robert Chisholm take part in the first round of debates in Ottawa yesterday.

For anyone hoping to separate the wheat from the chaff in the NDP leadership contest, yesterday's first all-candidates debate provided little grist for the mill.

With nine candidates vying to make their mark during the two-hour debate, no one had a real opportunity to shine — or fall flat.

The affair was largely collegial, with candidates sticking closely to tried-and-true social democratic bromides for the ailing economy and rarely disagreeing.

The only sparks came during a brief exchange between Brian Topp, the former party president, backroom strategist and confidante of the late Jack Layton, and Paul Dewar. That Topp chose to challenge Dewar over how he would pay for his spending promises had New Democrats buzzing that the presumptive frontrunner must feel threatened by the Ottawa MP.

The flicker of disagreement occurred early in the debate during a three-minute, three-way exchange between Topp, Dewar and Montreal MP Thomas Mulcair on a question about their approach to the green economy. Topp, who has proposed hiking income tax on the wealthiest individuals and corporations and mused about increasing the federal sales tax once the economy is on surer footing, questioned how Dewar proposes to pay for things like his proposed east-west energy grid and national infrastructure program.

"At the end of the day, what you're proposing to do with all of these plans is essentially to finance them by putting them on the public debt," Topp chided Dewar, noting that the Ottawa MP has ruled out increasing sales taxes.

"I thought we were talking about the environment," retorted Dewar.

Topp, the only one of the leading contenders with no experience as an elected politician, was under pressure going into yesterday's debate to demonstrate he wouldn't be steamrolled by more experienced debaters. That may account, in part, for his willingness to mix it up a bit.

The leadership vote will take place March 24. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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PIER PAOLO CITO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Italy's welfare minister Elsa Fornero

Italy OKs austerity measures

Prime Minister Mario Monti said yesterday his government of technocrats has approved a package of austerity and growth measures worth $40.53 billion to "reawaken" the Italian economy and help save the euro common currency from collapse.

The measures include immediate cuts to the costs of maintaining Italy's bulky political class as well as significant measures to fight tax evasion, Monti told a news conference following a three-hour cabinet meeting.

Monti will outline the measures today in addresses to both houses of Parliament, which must approve them.

"A lot depends on how well or not we explain to the citizens what we are trying to do," Monti said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market moment

PRICES AS OF 5 P.M. FRIDAY

TSX	Dollar
- 9.21 (12,104.08)	- 0.39¢ (98.02¢ US)
Oil	**Natural gas**
+ 31¢ US ($100.51 US)	$3.65 US (- 0.3¢)
	Gold
	$1,751.30 US (+ $11.50 US)

Electric car-sharing in Paris

2,000 drivers are already signed up to the eco-friendly program

Paris, in its latest bid to be an innovator of the City of Tomorrow, is launching an electric car-sharing program to cut air and noise pollution.

Autolib', a project built on the success of the city's bike-rental scheme, makes its debut yesterday and officials want the self-service e-cars to be as much a part of Paris life as the Eiffel Tower or Notre Dame Cathedral.

While many world cities have been developing greener alternatives to carbon-emitting vehicles, Paris says its program is the biggest of its kind: 250 vehicles hit the road on Monday, 2,000 are expected by next summer and 3,000 are planned within the next two years.

The four-seat compact Bluecar is a collaboration of Italian car designer Pininfarina and French conglomerate Groupe Bollore, which hopes to showcase its lithium battery.

"The city's first interest is fighting air pollution. These cars not only don't emit carbon dioxide, but localized exhaust fumes either," said Sylvain Marty, who heads the Autolib' partnership led by Paris and private-sector affiliates.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHRISTOPHE ENA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ A parking station for the Autolib' electric car-share program in Paris.

More content coming to Netflix Canada

Netflix is promising that 2012 will be a big year for the company in Canada, with plans to double its acquisition spending for movies and TV shows and give Canadians access to more quality content — although it still won't match the selection available in the U.S. In a letter, Netflix said next year's spending boost would give the Canadian service "comparable content quality" to the U.S. site

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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100 YEARS 1911 2011

DIRECTOR'S CHRISTMAS A WHITE ONE

URBAN COMPASS

JILL ELLIS
METRO LONDON

The energy emanating from Megan Moorhouse could power your home's holiday lights.

Moorhouse, who you could sum up as one busy person, is directing her first Musical Theatre Production at the Palace Theatre. She chose White Christmas as her debut there because it has universal appeal.

"Everyone has a memory of it as a first date or they watched with their parents," she said.

A product of Oakridge Secondary School's theatre program when it was run by local legend and teacher Art Fidler, Moorhouse feels lucky to have benefited from his tutelage. She studied under his direction at Oakridge and again in teacher's college at Althouse.

After finishing her drama and communications degree at the University of Windsor and earning her teaching credentials, Moorhouse was hired on at H.B. Beal Secondary School. Now 34, Moorhouse's teaching career has taken her from Beal to Lord Dorchester High School and back to Beal, where she loves directing theatre productions with students intent on making careers in the arts.

"Between teaching, acting and directing, Moorhouse is fully immersed in the local theatre scene and should be exhausted. But her bright smile — fuelled by seemingly endless energy — continues to sparkle."

It takes a ton of energy, but Moorhouse said the dedication of students and staff pays her back in spades.

"We are in that rare space where we have the support of the entire school. The art and technology departments contribute to the shows with special sets and props," she said.

A similar energy comes from community-theatre productions, such as White Christmas, because the actors there also strive constantly to improve their performances, Moorhouse said. Although usually a venue for amateur actors, White Christmas showcases the talents of a couple of local professionals who happen to be Moorhouse's friends and wanted to come home for the holidays.

Dean Greer is playing the role of Bob, played by Bing Crosby in the movie, while Danny Kaye's movie role is being performed by Cameron Carver.

"I think this is a tour-de-force role," Moorhouse said, explaining why professional actors would volunteer their time. "This is a singing, dancing, comedy spectacular and an opportunity for us all to work together."

Between teaching, acting and directing, Moorhouse is fully immersed in the local theatre scene and should be exhausted. But her bright smile — fuelled by seemingly endless energy — continues to sparkle.

White Christmas will take the Palace Theatre stage from Dec. 9 – 17.

Visit musicaltheatreproductions.ca for more information.

Contact Jill Ellis at londonurbancompass@metronews.ca

Bigs and littles have your shopping all wrapped up

NEWS WORTH SHARING

Media will always have to report on the tough stuff. But we know that Canada is full of compassionate individuals, inspiring projects and stories worth celebrating. Here's just one.

Do your presents look like they were wrapped as you were falling down the mall escalator? Well, if you're all thumbs when it comes to wrapping, don't despair!

At Masonville Place mall this holiday season (right up until Dec. 24), there will be a gift-wrapping booth to help you out. And the act of wrapping will be a gift, too, as proceeds from the booth, which will charge between $2 and $10 per package, will go to Big Brothers Big Sisters of London and Area (BBBSOLA).

"Every dollar raised goes towards the continuation of BBBSOLA's traditional one-to-one mentoring, school-based mentoring and programming for children that are waiting to be matched," says Samantha Kohn of BBBSOLA. Big Brothers Big Sisters reaches 1,000 young people in London and Middlesex County. And that's a wrap.

CRAIG AND MARC KIELBURGER

Help the good news get around. Send your stories of local heroes and positive action to goodnews@metowe.com and we will share them right here.

DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

Daily Zoom

All the Queen's bikers

Group of bikers ... from the army

LONDON. For Queen and country ... and motorbike junkies. The display team of the British army's Royal Signals White Helmets strike a practice pose ahead of the military tournament at Earls Court. Some 700 servicemen and women perform stunts that feature skills they use in the field. **MWN**

Defying death? It's an honour, sir

ATTRIBUTES. According to their website, the team of 30 volunteer soldiers demonstrate "all the personal qualities demanded of the modern Royal Signals soldier." What that entails is performing death-defying acrobatics and riding within millimetres of each other at speeds of up to 130 km/h. **MWN**

White Helmets

- **Equipment.** British Millennium Triumph 750cc motorcycle, producing 46bhp and weighing just under 200 kg.
- **Bit of a showoff.** "I can ride that better backwards than forwards," Cpl. Jason (Gyppo) Hooper wrote on an online forum.

metro
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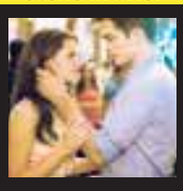
2 scene

Scene in brief



The latest Twilight movie still cast the longest shadow with $16.9 million for a third-straight No. 1 finish during one of the year's slowest weekends at the box office. Business was dismal, with box-office tracker Hollywood.com estimating Sunday that domestic revenues totalled just $82 million. That puts it barely ahead of Hollywood's worst haul of the year, when revenues were $81.5 million over the second weekend in September. Summit Entertainment's blockbuster The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 1 raised its domestic haul to $247.3 million. Coming in second again was Disney's The Muppets with $11.2 million, lifting the family film's domestic total to $56.1 million.

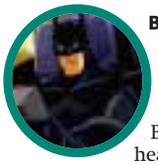
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Utah home inspired by movie Up sold for $400,000 to Disney fanatics

Eye on the detectives

Grab your deerstalker cap — Sherlock Holmes is back this month Robert Downey Jr. reprises his role as everyone's favourite gumshoe in the Game of Shadows To mark the release, we pit film and television's criminal investigators against each other in a sleuth-off

Scooby-Doo
The heart and soul of the Mystery Inc. gang may get the heebie-jeebies at the outset of every adventure, but give him some crunchy courage in the form of Scooby Snacks and he becomes doggone heroic.



Batman
Psychopathic baddies like Joker and Riddler love to taunt the caped crusader with twisted puzzles. In order to clean up the streets of Gotham City, Batman has to do equal parts of mental heavy lifting and Sok-Kapowing.

Winner: Batman
In the battle of slapstick versus beat-with-a-stick detective work, the Dark Knight leaves the Great Dane crying "rrr-uncle."

Lt. Debra Morgan (Dexter)
Dexter's sis may not piece together crimes as quickly as her blood-spatter expert/serial killing bro, but she's still got the sharpest tongue and coolest head on Miami Metro's homicide division.

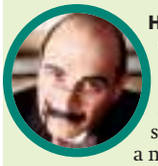
Deputy Chief Brenda Leigh Johnson (The Closer)
Major Crimes' cunning interrogator disarms suspects with her trademark genial "thank you, thank you so much" Southern charm before going in for the kill.

Winner: Brenda Leigh Johnson
While they're both highly capable workaholics, Morgan's solve rate suffers because her brother hampers investigations to satisfy his dark passenger.

Lt. Columbo
Outwardly naive and absentminded, the sly detective, in his rumpled trench coat and battered Peugeot, gave suspects a false sense of security before tripping them up with a few final questions. "And oh, just one more thing…"

Adrian Monk
Despite being socially awkward, hamstrung by a severe case of OCD, and afflicted with a host of phobias including germs, milk and dentists, when it comes to solving crimes he is a genius.

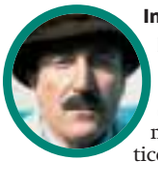
Winner: Adrian Monk
When the defective detective is on the trail, it never grows cold. And it doesn't hurt that he has a blonde sidekick to carry his disinfectant hand-wipes.



Hercule Poirot
One of the least physically active detectives, this Belgian sleuth prefers to work from the comforts of his easy chair. Using his "little grey cells", he solves epic mysteries while maintaining a meticulously groomed moustache.

Miss Marple
This prim octogenarian spinster seems more inclined to knit a pair of mittens then solve a grisly murder. Don't let her little old lady looks fool you. Miss Marple is a straight up O.G. with a mind like a bacon slicer.

Winner: Hercule Poirot
The sheer international import of Poirot, who put Belgium on the map decades before the Muscles from Brussels, puts him firmly in the catbird seat.



Inspector Jacques Clouseau
He has no discernable powers of deduction and possesses an uncanny knack for ignoring the obvious. But in the end, the pride of the French Sûreté still manages to bring the bad guys to justice, albeit accidentally.

Inspector Gadget
Though he can do almost anything thanks to an arsenal of cybernetic attachments, Gadget is clueless. But thanks to his whip-smart niece Penny and her dog Brain, Gadget bats one thousand when it comes to foiling Dr. Claw.

Winner: Inspector Gadget
While both are bumbling nitwits, Gadget's entourage reduces Clouseau to French toast. This article will now self destruct.

MIKE DOJC

A different kind of Blueprint

Jay-Z's raps provide basis for college class as professor probes lyrics with academic lens

Michael Eric Dyson parses Jay-Z's lyrics as if analyzing fine literature. The rapper's riffs on luxury cars and tailored clothes and boasts of being the "Mike Jordan of recording" may make for catchy rhymes, but to Dyson, they also reflect incisive social commentary.

Dyson, a professor, author, radio host and television personality, has offered at Georgetown University this semester a popular — if unusual — class dedicated to Jay-Z and his career. The course, Sociology of Hip Hop: Jay-Z, may seem an unlikely offering at a Jesuit, majority-white school that counts former President Bill Clinton among its alumni.

But Dyson insists that his class confronts topics present in any sociology course: racial and gender identity, sexuality, capitalism and economic inequality.

Music lesson

- Classes centred on pop culture superstars like Bruce Springsteen have sprouted on college campuses in recent years; Dyson himself says he's previously taught classes on Tupac Shakur and Marvin Gaye.

"It just happens to have an interesting object of engagement in Jay-Z — and what better way to meet people where they are?" Dyson said. "It's like Jesus talking to the woman at the well. You ask for a drink of water, then you get into some theological discussions."

Dyson says Jay-Z, whose real name is Shawn Carter, is a worthy subject because of his diversity of business interests — a clothing entrepreneur, he's also a part owner of the NBA's New Jersey Nets (soon to move to his native New York borough of Brooklyn) — as well as his immense cross-cultural appeal and "lyrical prowess" in articulating contemporary black culture and his place in it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brooke Mueller is busted...again

Charlie Sheen's ex arrested on drug and assault charges: People magazine ◗ Mueller has custody of their two kids ◗ Her second arrest for cocaine possession

ASPEN POLICE DEPARTMENT VIA GETTY IMAGES

▶ Brooke Mueller's mug shot taken Saturday in Aspen, Colorado.

THE WORD

DOROTHY ROBINSON
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

It was a slow weekend for celebrities behaving badly, but luckily for gossip columnists everywhere, Brooke Mueller still can't get her act together.

That lady parties more than most Hollywood celebs combined.

The latest indiscretions of Charlie Sheen's ex? After a wild Friday night, she was arrested in Aspen on assault and drug charges, according to People magazine. (Why always Aspen? Doesn't she ever go skiing out there?)

The mother of two and frequent rehab resident was picked up at the nightclub Escobar after another female patron complained to police about an altercation.

"Mueller was arrested and charged with assault in the third degree and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute," an Aspen police official says.

"Mueller posted bond of $11,000 and was released with a district court date of Dec.19, 2011."

This was Mueller's second arrest for cocaine possession. In July, she had just finished a 30-day rehab session. Although this seems like not-so-huge news, be prepared for a Sheen media onslaught this week, as Mueller has custody of their two children.

And just when you thought you'd get through the year without hearing from him again.

Cooper isn't buying it

ALL OTHER PHOTO GETTY IMAGES

Bradley Cooper doesn't necessarily enjoy being the Sexiest Man Alive, a title recently bestowed upon him by People magazine.

"It's been a weird couple of weeks. I did originally laugh and then I just started crying," Cooper tells British website OMG.

"I guess it's a bit of a joke. I hope that it won't change things." In fact, while other actors might see the title as an achievement, Cooper is worried it might become something of an impediment to his acting career. "I'm glad it doesn't detract from my work, I hope it doesn't," he says. "It would be unfortunate it if did because I'm not really that guy at all." METRO

▶ Bradley Cooper

Celebrity tweets

@SteveMartinToGo

Life is just a series of Tweets.

@katyperry

First I'm pregnant & then I'm divorced. What am I All My Children?!

@craigyferg

Playboy interviewed me but rejected my pictorial. Probably for the best

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How to explain Santa

Even parents who loathe the commercial aspect of the holiday season can't get away from Santa Claus What are the implications of lying to children about the myth that is Father Christmas? And when are children ready to hear the truth about St. Nick?

EMMA E. FORREST
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA
METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON

Imagine you're three years old and a fat bearded man in a red suit starts laughing in your face. You'd be confused. Scared. And you'd probably run to Mommy.

So when and how do you tell your child about who, exactly, this man is?

They should be ready to understand the background story of Father Christmas at about age three, says Dr. Jerome Singer, professor emeritus of psychology and child study at Yale University, and a specialist in children's imagination.

"Before that it's confusing to the child. At three, four and five years, children are doing a great deal of pretending and make believe anyway."

Either way, you can't escape the myth.

"If your children go to school and are part of mainstream society, then it's hard to see how you can avoid it," says Oliver James, a clinical psychologist and author.

"At age two, three and four, children are living a wild fantasy life already. The idea that there is a big man flying around the world giving gifts shouldn't be a hard sell," he says.

Parents shouldn't worry about participating in the great red-and-white lie.

"Lying is an integral part of life from an early age; children witness parents saying (to unwelcome callers) 'tell him I'm not in'" says James. "So there's nothing too complicated about that."

In fact, fantasizing about Santa's adventures could benefit a child's cognitive development.

"There are many advantages for the child developing relatively early a capacity for pretending and imagination," says Singer.

Children with active imaginations at an early age learn new vocabularies, master the idea of possibilities by experimenting with different social situations, trying them out and seeing what works and what doesn't, so they learn to self-regulate, Singer explains.

Communicate with your kids about the Santa myth, says Singer, and be alert to factors that will confuse them, including different Santas appearing in shops and on TV.

Most kids find out the truth from siblings or at school. Don't push kids who want to believe but prepare them for the truth as they hit early school age.

"At three, four and five years, children are doing a great deal of pretending and make believe anyway."
JEROME SINGER, PSYCHOLOGIST

THINKSTOCKPHOTOS.COM

▶ Who is this Santa Claus guy anyway?

Analysis

GIVE CHRISTMAS MEANING

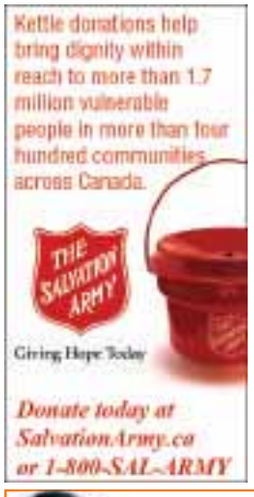
Oliver James, author of Affluenza, a book about how our competitive consumerist culture makes us anxious, suggests ways to give Christmas a non-commercial meaning.

Create games and traditions
Find a film that the family can watch together (The Sound of Music, Casablanca), and watch it every year, creating rituals away from the consumption of gifts.

Reinforce anti-materialism
Remind your kids that money and possessions aren't going to make them happy throughout the year, and that richer people aren't necessarily happier.

Make them ad-savvy
Kids love impressing you with their cleverness. Teach them how to decrypt the ads that try to sell them products they don't need throughout the year.

Measles outbreaks on the rise across Europe, increasing cases also spreading to US. Scan code for story.


Kettle donations help bring dignity within reach to more than 1.7 million vulnerable people in more than four hundred communities across Canada.
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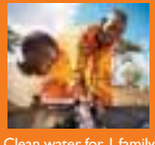
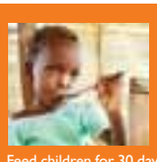
You can be the difference between sickness and health, hunger and nutrition, hopelessness and opportunity.


Clean water for 1 family
$100 (1362)


Feed children for 30 days
$45 (1685)

Educate a girl
$60 (2469)

3 soccer balls
$30 (1909)

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Apple juice on high alert?

Experts get to the core of issue after TV personality Dr. Oz claims that arsenic in apple juice poses concerns

ISTOCK PHOTO

▶ Some nutritionists argue that the real danger of apple juice is the empty calories.

It's true — apple juice can pose a risk to your health. But not necessarily from the trace amounts of arsenic that people are arguing about.

Despite the U.S. government's consideration of new limits on arsenic, nutrition experts say apple juice's real danger is to waistlines and children's teeth. Apple juice has few natural nutrients, lots of calories and, in some cases, has even more sugar than soda.

"It's like sugar water," said Judith Stern, a nutrition professor at the University of California, Davis, who has consulted for candy makers as well as Weight Watchers. "I won't let my three-year-old grandson drink apple juice."

Many juices are fortified with vitamins, so they're not just empty calories. But that doesn't appease some nutritionists.

"If it wasn't healthy in the first place, adding vitamins doesn't make it into a health food," and if it causes weight gain, it's not a healthy choice, said Karen Ansel, a dietitian in New York and spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association.

The American Academy of Pediatrics says juice can be part of a healthy diet, but its policy is blunt: "Fruit juice offers no nutritional benefit for infants younger than six months" and no benefits over whole fruit for older kids.

Kids under 12 consume 28 per cent of all juice and juice drinks, according to the academy. Nationwide, apple juice is second only to orange juice in popularity.

Americans slurp almost 267 ounces of apple juice on average each year, according to the Food Institute's Almanac of Juice Products and the Juice Products Association, a trade group.

TVs Dr. Mehmet Oz raised alarm — some say false alarm — over arsenic in apple juice, based on tests his show commissioned by a private lab. The Food and Drug Administration said that its own tests disagreed and that apple juice is safe.

However, after Consumer Reports did its own tests on several juice brands, the FDA said it will examine whether its restrictions on the amount of arsenic allowed in apple juice are stringent enough.

Some forms of arsenic, such as the type found in pesticides, can be toxic and may pose a cancer risk if consumed at high levels or over a long period.

All juice sold in the U.S. must meet U.S. standards, said Pat Faison, technical director for the juice association. As for making nutritious choices, "a lot of the information that people need about fruit juices is on the label," she said.

So what's on those labels?

Carbohydrates, mostly sugars, in a much higher concentration than in milk. Juice has a small amount of protein and minerals and lacks the fibre in whole fruit.

Drinking juice delivers a lot of calories quickly so you don't realize how much you've consumed, whereas you would have to eat a lot of apples to get the same amount, and "you would feel much, much more full from the apples," Ansel said.

"Whole fruits are much better for you," said Dr. Frank Greer, a University of Wisconsin, Madison, professor and former head of the pediatrics academy's nutrition committee.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Healthy pasta, huge taste

Heart friendly and palate pleasing — put shrimp pasta on the menu

PHOTO/NEWS CANADA

▶ Dinner gets a healthy boost with whole-grain pasta, and shrimp.

Ingredients:

- 1 package whole grain spaghetti
- 1 head radicchio, quartered and shaved in thin slices
- 1 cup of marinated shrimp (see mix below)
- 1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp of extra virgin olive oil

For the marinade:

- 1 tsp parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp rosemary, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 200 grams shrimp, small peeled and cleaned
- 2 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ tsp red pepper, crushed

Looking for a dish that is simple and impressive? Celebrity chef Scott Conant of Scarpetta restaurant has created a delicious dish that is sure to satisfy your pasta craving.

Preparation:

1. Marinate shrimp with parsley, rosemary, extra virgin olive oil, garlic and crushed red pepper.
2. Heat olive oil in a sauté pan. Sauté the sliced garlic until just before it turns brown. Add the shredded radicchio and sauté for 7-10 minutes.
3. Cook pasta until it's almost al dente. Drain. Reserve some cooking liquid (¼ cup) and set aside.
4. Add pasta cooking water (approximately (¼ cup) to sauté pan and cook for a minute or so. Then, add the pasta that is 90 per cent cooked. Add the marinated shrimp and cook thoroughly.

NEWS CANADA

Warm up with holiday brisket

Bring Southern goodness to the kitchen table with tender brisket

Ingredients:

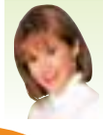
- 1/2 cup) kosher salt
- 45 ml (3 tsp) coarsely ground black pepper
- 10 ml (2 tsp) cayenne pepper
- (9- to 11-pound) whole beef brisket, untrimmed
- Four to six 375 ml (12-ounce) bottles beer

Preparation:

1. Heat oven to 325 F. Set a metal rack over a rimmed baking sheet.
2. Mix salt, pepper and cayenne. Add mixture to all the sides of brisket.
3. Pour 1 beer into a loaf pan. Set on low rack.
4. Place brisket, fat side up, on rack. Roast 4 to 6 hours.
   Add a beer every hour. Cook until meat reaches 185 F at centre. Remove and let sit for 20 minutes. Slice brisket thinly to serve.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rose Reisman's Swap It



Double double coffee will add unnecessary weight and increase your risk of Type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Watch liquid calories.

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PUTTING DIRTY OPTIONS THROUGH A WASH

Is it better to hand wash dishes or use my dishwasher? *Mike of Don Mills, Ont.*

QUEEN OF GREEN

LINDSAY COULTER
GREEN@METRONEWS.CA

Let me ask you this; can you wash and rinse a dirty plate with a cup of water?

Researchers at the University of Bonn in Germany found that, compared to hand washing, dishwashers use only half the energy, one-sixth of the water, and less soap.

The most careful of hand-washers just could not beat the dishwashers we are blessed with today.

The study also rated the level of cleanliness.

Once again, the dishwasher won.

Energy Star claims that using an efficient dishwasher instead of an older one will cut your utility bills by more than $40 a year.

An Energy Star-qualified dishwasher can save you more than 230 hours of time over the course of a year (almost 10 days).

Although, if you find washing dishes therapeutic, who am I to argue with the value of quality me time?

And as usual, there are qualifiers.

It's pretty tough to do a better job by hand than using an energy-efficient dishwasher.

Run your machine full, on the light cycle and turn off the heated drying option.

And for the love of Pete, choose an eco-friendly dishwasher and/or dishwashing soap.

If a product doesn't list ingredients, leave it on the shelf.

Look for products with eco-labels like Green Seal or Environmental Choice's EcoLogo.

The bottom-line: It's pretty tough to do a better job by hand than using an energy-efficient dishwasher.

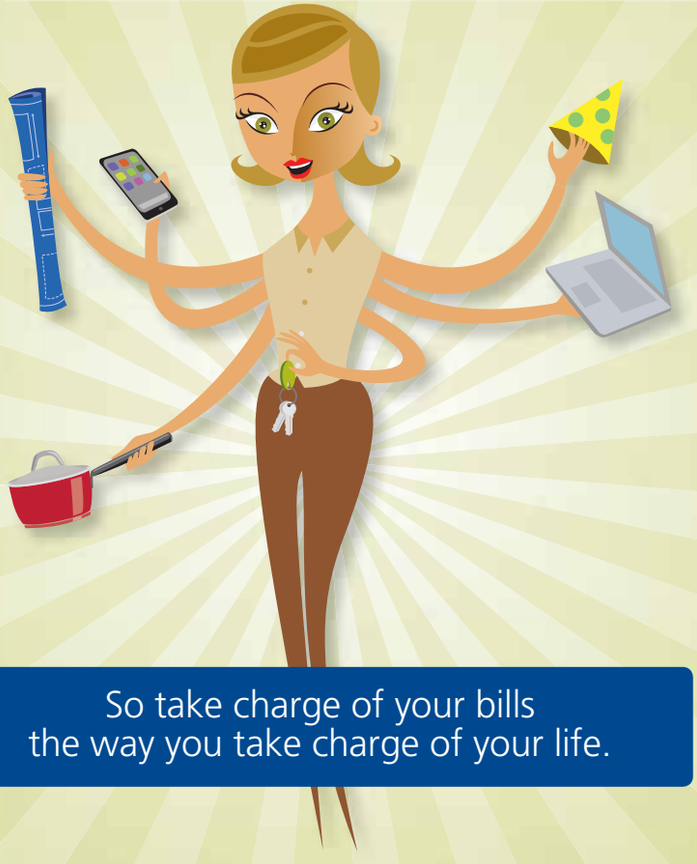
But then there are the big pots (space hogs), knives (that get dull from clanking against dishes), and plastic containers (that release harmful chemicals when washed).

These should be hand-washed.

You can do a more efficient job by scraping food into the compost instead of wasting water rinsing.

David Suzuki Foundation

You're one text-messaging-business-pitching-get-the-kids-to-music-lessons kind of woman…



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Her business is doing just grape

A toast to former model Caroline Granger, who traded in glamour and photoshoots for grape vines and family

TURNING POINT

TERESA KRUZE
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA

"I've gone from walking on alligators to dancing on them!" Caroline tells me from her office at The Grange, the award-winning winery she has grown and nurtured for the past 10 years.

It's been quite the journey for Caroline Granger, who found incredible success as a Ford model in Paris at the age of 16. Love and children brought her back to North America and ultimately to the family farm in Prince Edward County in Ontario where she's been raising her three children.

Bottle business

The Grange Estate Winery

- 72,000 vinifera vines
- 60 acres under vine
- H6 distinct vineyard blocks
- Recent Gold medal winner at international wine competition in Hong Kong
- Best white wine in show at the Royal Winter Fair

PEGGY DEWITT

▶ Caroline Granger

In 1999 she planted some grape vines for a friend and it got her thinking about the wine business.

With the support of her family she went back to school and planted 10 acres. The learning curve was steep but success soon followed.

"I have this huge excitement that we're on the edge of something new and dancing on alligators is how I view the future. I am thrilled to be a woman in agriculture and I'm passionate about making wine. This business is very hard but I know this is absolutely where I'm supposed to be and I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing."

FORD MODELING AGENCY

▶ Granger in her modeling days.

Role model

- Begin with the end in mind.
- Even if it's a simple vision it will help guide you.
- Do your homework and risk assessment.
- Have an unshakable belief in yourself and your dream
- Inspire people and make a difference

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JULIA WEST
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METRO WORLD NEWS IN NEW YORK

The progression of technology brings the expansion of IT jobs, and 2012 will be no exception. With more businesses going digital and phrases like "cloud storage" becoming commonplace, the world of IT careers is budding with new opportunities.

Robert Half Technology just released their list of the hottest jobs for 2012, many of them falling under the IT umbrella. Here are three that are especially promising.

1 Mobile applications developer

Not surprisingly, this job comes out on top. Considering the long list of things you can do from your phone — banking, gaming and even video chatting — it's no wonder that this field is booming.

"Mobile development has surpassed web development and is now leading in shaping future professionals," says Leonardo Mattiazzi, vice president of international business at IT services company Ci&T.

2 User experience designer

UX designers, to those in the know, "create positive digital experiences," according to Robert Half Technology.

Mattiazzi believes that the job description is blurring the lines and tapping into all sorts of creative talent.

"Developers can no longer rely only on their technical skills, and UX designers can no longer rely only on their creative skills. The blending of UX skills and technical skills is becoming a de-facto demand," he says.

3 Data security analyst

This is the e-bouncer of a company. David Hurst, principal at the financial accounting and advisory firm WeiserMazars LLP, sees growth happening already.

"Now that it's becoming feasible to break up complex business processes and execute different parts in different technologies on-site and in the Cloud, it is increasing the demand for architecture and integration skills to design and manage these complex multi-platform processes," Hurst says.

Green Bay stays perfect

Packers beat Giants on final play, clinch playoff berth • Fourth loss in a row for New York

PACKERS	GIANTS
38	35

NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Jordy Nelson of the Green Bay Packers makes a reception in the final minute of the fourth quarter against Will Blackmon of the New York Giants yesterday.

The Green Bay Packers are still perfect and heading to the playoffs.

Aaron Rodgers engineered a last minute drive to set up a 30-yard field goal by Mason Crosby on the final play and the Green Bay Packers remained undefeated and clinched a playoff berth with a 38-35 victory over the New York Giants yesterday.

Rodgers hit three passes of more than 18 yards on the drive in the final 58 seconds as the Super Bowl champion Packers (12-0) won their 18th straight game and handed the Giants (6-6) their fourth straight loss.

New York, which was blown out by New Orleans Monday night, tied the game on a two-yard Eli Manning touchdown pass and a two-point conversion run by D.J. Ware with just under a minute to play.

However, Rodgers, who threw four touchdown passes, wasn't going to settle for overtime after a touchback on the ensuing kickoff.

On first down, he completed a pass to Jermichael Finley just over the outstretched hands of rookie linebacker Jacquian Williams and the tight end rumbled 24 yards up the right sideline to the 44.

A 24-yard pass to Jordy Nelson down the left sideline moved the ball to the New York 29 and an 18-yard pass to Greg Jennings two plays later moved the ball to the 12.

Green Bay called time out with three seconds to go, and then Crosby delivered his winning kick.

The Packers would clinch the NFC North if Detroit lost to New Orleans on Sunday night.

For the Giants, everything wasn't terrible. Dallas also lost, leaving New York a game behind the Cowboys with four games to go. The two teams will play twice over that span.

Rodgers, who was harassed by Giants front and sacked three times, finished 28 of 46 for 369 yards.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

4 sports

Quoted

"It just feels awesome, whatever it is."

TIGER WOODS, ON WHAT HE WAS FEELING AFTER WINNING HIS FIRST GOLF TOURNAMENT IN OVER TWO YEARS. WOODS POURED IN A PUTT TO CAP OFF A BIRDIE-BIRDIE FINISH AT THE CHEVRON WORLD CHALLENGE YESTERDAY TO BEAT FORMER MASTERS CHAMPION ZACH JOHNSON BY ONE SHOT. THE WIN ENDED A DROUGHT THAT LASTED 749 DAYS, AND MIGHT HAVE SIGNALLED A CHANGE THAT WOODS IS ON HIS WAY BACK.

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‘It can all change in three days in Dallas’

Pujols, Fielder and Reyes stir discussion at baseball’s winter meetings as league awaits first big move

Albert Pujols, Prince Fielder and Jose Reyes could find a landing spot for the future. Gil Hodges, Ron Santo and Minnie Minoso could lock up a legacy forever.

Baseball’s winter meetings open today, a four-day session that often turns into a fan’s delight. There’s always the promise of blockbuster trades and major free-agent signings — even if they don’t happen, the rumours and speculation keep it interesting.

Will the New York Yankees work out a swap for Cubs pitcher Matt Garza? Will some bullpen add A’s all-star closer Andrew Bailey? Will C.J. Wilson or Mark Buehrle strike riches?

A couple of trades have already been made since Pujols and the St. Louis Cardinals won the World Series. Huge deals, not yet.

“It may have something to do with the top free agents not having moved, Pujols and Fielder and Jose Reyes,” New York Mets general manager Sandy Alderson said a few days ago. “It may just be the tension — not the tension, but the dynamic between clubs and free agents. The free agents would like to think that a certain market exists. And the clubs, at this point, are holding out some hope that that market doesn’t exist.”

“But it can all change in three days in Dallas,” he said.

The 1,606-room Anatole, a familiar baseball site. The hotel is hosting the meetings for the sixth time — inside its walls in 2000, more than a half-billion dollars was spent in a hurry as Alex Rodriguez, Manny Ramirez and Mike Hampton each got nine-figure contracts.

This morning, history is at stake. The Hall of Fame’s Veterans Committee will reveal whether it has elected any new members. Hodges, Santo, Minoso are on the 10-person Golden Era ballot covering 1947-72. The announcement is set for 11 a.m. EST.

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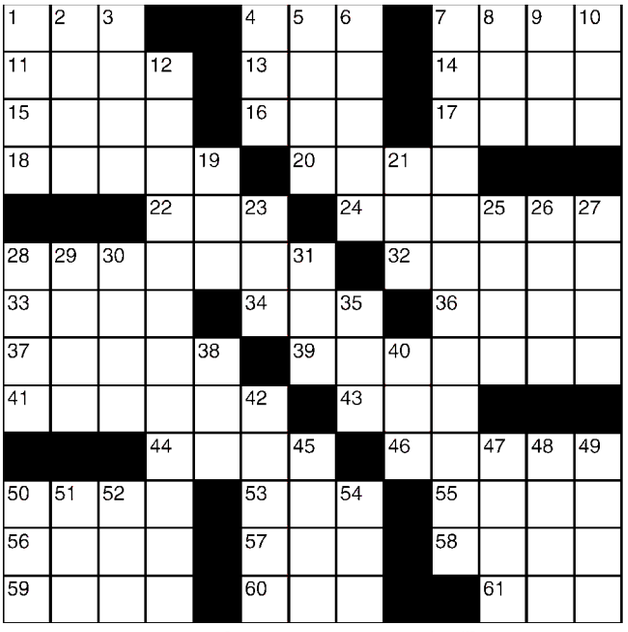
Crossword



Across

1 Two-timer
4 Arrow launcher
7 Goya's "Naked" subject
11 Scads
13 Atmosphere
14 PC picture
15 Panorama
16 Beer cousin
17 Fender bender
18 Artist's support
20 Knitting need
22 Lower limb
24 Used a switchblade on
28 Unimportant
32 Spry
33 Relaxation
34 — de deux
36 Lug
37 Bother
39 Washington city
41 Half-hour TV show, often
43 Blond shade
44 Hawaiian feast
46 Eccentric
50 Note from the boss
53 54-Down stat
55 Eye layer
56 United nations
57 Slithery squeezer
58 Skaters' venue
59 Out of control
60 Switch positions
61 Two, in Tijuana

Down

1 Bear lair, often
2 Others (Lat.)
3 Accomplishes
4 Sheep's cry
5 Unctuous
6 Cause, as havoc
7 Dark time
8 Expert
9 "The Daily Show With — Stewart"
10 Pismire
12 Another way to say 7-Down
19 Floral neckwear
21 Genetic letters
23 Space
25 Authoritative command
26 Hebrew month
27 Take out of context?
28 Earl Grey's kin
29 Hindu princess
30 "Say It — So"
31 — Vegas
35 The Red or the Black
38 Thee
40 Request
42 Ballroom dance
45 "Once — a time ..."
47 "Amores" poet
48 Gambling game
49 Tibetan herd
50 Biz deg.
51 Shade tree
52 Cattle call?
54 Auto fuel

▶ Thursday's answer

T	A	P	E	S		A	D	O		F	A	S
S	P	U	R	T		L	O	U		A	R	E
A	T	R	I	A		P	U	R	V	I	E	W
		C	E	L	L	A	R		E	R	N	E
U	S	E		L	A	C		B	R	E	A	D
S	O	L	D		B	A	S	I	S			
A	L	L	E	G	E		T	O	U	P	E	E
			B	A	L	E	R		S	U	M	O
A	P	A	R	T		M	A	D		R	U	N
S	A	K	I		P	O	W	E	L	L		
P	U	R	S	U	I	T		R	O	O	D	S
I	L	O		F	E	E		B	R	I	D	E
C	A	N		O	D	D		Y	E	N	T	A

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Today's horoscope

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 What happens over the next seven days will make life fun again.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 Today could turn out to be rather challenging, but in a pleasant way.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 Action speaks louder than words, so act fast, be first and get the job done.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 Get that glum look off your face and believe that good things (and good people) are coming your way.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 Don't allow yourself to get worked up about some of the things that go on in the world.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 Fate is about to introduce you to someone who can transform your existence.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 Let the world know who you are and what you can do – and make sure you do it.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 Go places, do things and make new friends. Life has rarely looked better.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 You want to help those who can't help themselves and the best way to do that is to join forces with those who share your concerns.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 You have always been ambitious but are your ambitions inspired by your ideals or are you interested in nothing more than profit and position?

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 All things change with time and it's time you moved on – to better things, of course.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20. What you believe is likely to change profoundly over the next few days. SALLY BROMPTON

Sudoku

2		1			9		8	
			3	6				1
6				2		3		
		4					1	
		3	9		5	4		
	7					9		
		8		7				5
1			3	5				
	4		2			8		6

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Thursday's answer ▶

8	3	7	9	6	1	5	2	4
6	1	4	2	8	5	9	7	3
9	5	2	3	4	7	6	1	8
1	9	6	8	5	2	3	4	7
2	8	3	6	7	4	1	5	9
4	7	5	1	3	9	2	8	6
7	4	9	5	2	6	8	3	1
3	2	1	4	9	8	7	6	5
5	6	8	7	1	3	4	9	2

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You can now post your kiss, and read even more kisses, at metronews.ca/kiss.

Everyone on Earth,
This is sort of a global prayer, and as it is, a very personal one as well. I want to wish everyone so much love to cradle their days and nights. I wish everyone could find it in their hearts to cast away fear in their lives... or at least use it to find what is true and beautiful. I wish for clarity in love, peace for those in need, and for some to shed their egos and stop it with excessive consumerism. As always, I would want everyone to find their soul/mate love of their dreams. I wish these things. To dreams coming true!
WEE EARTHLING

Reeda Durrani,
i love you and will always love you
BILAL AMER

PETER DEJONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Caption contest

FABRIZIO GIOVANNOZZI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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